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ABSTRACT

This guide offers 12 projects that school boards can initiate to counter alienation and strengthen relationships among themselves, the public they represent, and the staff and students whom their decisions affect. Already tried and tested by a variety of school districts throughout the U.S., the activities include an annual citizen conference on education, a realtors' seminar, public neighborhood forums, organizing parents to help set goals for the district, monthly luncheons with community leaders, curriculum presentations, an annual art show, a weekly employee newsletter, a newspaper column, informal sessions with students, an awards ceremony for outstanding student achievement, and receptions for retiring employees. (Author/LD)

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A Dozen Projects To Improve Relations With Your Community

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A Dozen Projects to Improve Relations With Your Community

National School Boards Association

Margaret Buvinger, *President*
Thomas A. Shannon, *Executive Director*

James Betchkal, *Associate Executive Director*
Office of Program Services
Lee VanBremen, *Assistant Executive Director*
Special Services Section
Rob Olcott, *Director*
Information Services Department
Lisa Roth, *Information Assistant*

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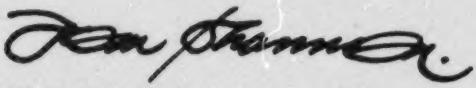
Foreword

We are told all too often today that citizens feel alienated from their public schools. Likewise, we hear that teachers, staff and students frequently feel alienated from the educational policy decisions that directly affect their daily roles.

This NSBA boardguide brings together a dozen activities designed to combat any sense of alienation by strengthening relationships among school boards, the public they represent and the staff and students whom their decisions directly affect.

The twelve projects presented here have been tried and tested by a variety of school districts throughout the U.S. The procedures involved in each are outlined explicitly so that school boards easily can adopt or modify the projects to suit their particular needs.

As the work of governing and administering public schools grows ever more complex, there is a corresponding increase in the need for sound school district communications—both internally and externally. The school board is where such programs originate and where their continuance must be assured.



Thomas A. Shannon
Executive Director
National School Boards Association

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Annual Citizen Conference on Education

Prospectus

An annual conference dealing with a current education topic demonstrates the district's interest in current education issues and its concern for the quality of education.

The citizen conference also provides school officials with an opportunity to increase public awareness of education and district needs and to gather citizens' perceptions of school needs and problems. In addition, this project promotes good community relations by involving citizens, the school board, staff, students and PTA leaders in a cooperative effort.

Procedures

(Suggested target date: November—to coincide with American Education Week)

Prior to the conference

In April, the **school board** begins the process of selecting a theme for the conference. The theme should be one of current interest (such as student test scores)—not necessarily one with which the board is presently concerned, but one that likely will appeal to the public. In developing a list of possible topics, the board solicits suggestions from district administrators, teaching staff and PTA leaders.

In May, the **school board** forms a planning committee made up of roughly equal numbers of citizens (both parents and non-parents, preferably), board members and school staff. Again, the board may contact the PTA to obtain names of citizens who might be interested in serving on the committee.

During May, June and July, the **planning committee** and the district's **public information officer** develop the program, deciding upon the issues to be discussed, speakers and the format and schedule for the conference. One possible format: for-

mal speeches (or a panel discussion) on the theme, followed by a question-and-answer session, and finally, small discussion groups, each chaired by one of the guest speakers, with a board member participating in each. (For ideas on obtaining speakers, committee members may contact a local college or university, or an education association with speakers' files, such as the state school boards association.)

Once the program and speakers have been selected, the **public information officer** begins working with the local media to begin publicizing the conference. The media should be provided with general information about the conference itself (date, time, place and purpose), information about the speakers and background materials on the conference theme.

In August, the **public information officer** prepares programs and background material on the topic, which are distributed to all who attend the conference.

In October, the **food service director** arranges for food and/or beverages, if they are to be provided.

During September and October, the **conference committee** contacts art teachers and arranges for student work to be on display.

The **principal** of the school where the conference is to be held is responsible for seeing that the building and equipment—such as audio-visual aids and microphones—are ready. An auditorium, if available, is the best setting for the conference.

The **conference committee** and the **administrative staff** handle transportation needs of speakers and arrange accommodations for any out-of-town guests or speakers.

Three weeks before the conference, the **public information officer** prepares news releases and/or public service announcements encouraging public attendance at the conference. The information officer also arranges pre-conference interviews for speakers. Speakers should, of course, be informed of these interviews in advance and should arrive a few hours before the conference is scheduled to begin.

During the conference

The **board president** introduces speakers, moderates question-and-answer sessions and otherwise serves as on-site coordinator. Following speeches, participants may break out into small discussion groups with a **board member** leading each.

Following the conference

As soon as possible, the **public information officer** prepares a news release providing a general description of the conference and summarizing speeches and participants' comments.

Realtors' Seminar

Prospectus

There are several community groups which deserve special attention on the board's public relations agenda. Realtors are one such group.

The quality of the public schools often is a primary consideration of families moving into an area. Chances are that relocating clients will be able to glean a realtor's sincere feelings about the area schools. As such, these feelings should be good ones.

A brief breakfast meeting/seminar can serve to familiarize realtors with district schools. This enables realtors to better serve their clients interested in buying property in the community. During such a seminar, board members and the superintendent can field realtors' questions about the schools and can build personal relationships with this key audience.

Procedures

(Sample target date: April 1—should take place on a day school is in session)

Prior to the seminar

In February, the **public information officer** develops a list of realtors in the area. This may be done through the local real estate board or simply by using the telephone book.

Written invitations are mailed to realtors March 1. At about the same time, the **public information officer** chooses a typical school—not the newest, not the most traditional—and contacts the principal to plan a tour of it. Realtors may want to tour schools other than the one where the seminar is to be held; the information officer therefore contacts the **principals** and **PTA leaders** at other schools in the district so they can arrange for tours of those schools after the seminar, if necessary.

Toward the middle of March, the **public information officer** assembles or prepares hand-out materials describing schools in

the district and the range of instructional programs offered. Enough copies are printed so that realtors will be able to take copies to give to clients. The information officer also contacts food service personnel and arranges a continental breakfast. The public information officer prepares a short evaluation form to be filled out by realtors following the seminar. The form should ask realtors to state which parts of the seminar they particularly liked or disliked and should solicit suggestions for improvement.

The **board president** (or another board member) prepares a brief welcoming speech; the **superintendent,** a brief overview of the district—its philosophy and its schools.

A few days prior to the seminar, the **public information officer** mails to local media a press release describing the content and objectives of the seminar.

During the seminar

Immediately before breakfast, the **board president** delivers a welcoming speech. Following the meal, the **superintendent** discusses the district's programs and goals.

The **principal** of the host school conducts a tour of the school, followed by a question-and-answer session moderated by the **superintendent.**

The **public information officer** distributes the evaluation forms. These should be collected at the seminar, to insure a high rate of response.

The realtors tour a school of their choice. **Parents** serve as tour guides.

Following the seminar

As soon as possible after the seminar, the **public information officer** mails a press release describing the event and including positive comments (perhaps taken from evaluation forms) of participants.

The **public information officer** and **school board** review evaluation forms and consider suggested improvements for subsequent seminars.

Public Neighborhood Forums

Prospectus

Studies continue to show that most citizens know little about either the workings or the responsibilities of their local school boards. Many mistakenly believe board meetings are closed to outsiders and that board decisions are made behind closed doors. In order to dispel this notion, the school board can hold forum meetings, which are moved to different school buildings during the year. The well-received Neighborhood Forums have proved successful in establishing face-to-face dialogue between the board and the community, and in increasing public interest and participation in district affairs.

Procedures

Prior to the forum

The **school board**, at its July meeting, adopts a resolution setting the schedule for forum sessions, making sure that the meetings do not interfere with schedules of the PTA or other citizen groups at each building to be visited. One member of the board is appointed to serve on a committee which prepares the forum agenda. Other members of this committee include the **superintendent**, the **principal** of the school at which the meeting is to be held, a **PTA representative** and the district **public information officer**.

Three weeks before the forum, the **PTA**, through a telephone campaign, contacts residents of the school area to identify items of interest to the particular neighborhood in which the forum is being held.

Two weeks prior to the forum, the **committee** meets to finalize the agenda, using the questions and comments submitted by district residents.

Immediately following the agenda planning committee meeting—about a week and a half before the forum—the **public**

information officer sends out a news release to local newspapers outlining the agenda and encouraging public attendance. Inexpensive flyers announcing the forum are sent home with all students in the district—not just those residing in the neighborhood of the school hosting the forum. The **PTA** publicizes the meeting in its newsletter.

The **superintendent** and **board member** on the committee decide who—a board member, the superintendent or another district administrator—will field the various questions gathered earlier through the telephone campaign. Persons responsible for fielding questions prepare their responses.

During the forum

The **board president** welcomes those attending and emphasizes the purpose and structure of the forum. Copies of the forum agenda are distributed to the audience. Board members, the superintendent and other school officials can also take questions from the floor, either as they pertain to specific items in the agenda, or at the end of the meeting.

Following the forum

Comments from participants attending the forum are transcribed and routed to an appropriate administrator or staff member for their information. The district newsletter capsulizes key points discussed at the forum and a press release is prepared and distributed to local media.

Using Parents to Help Set Goals for the School District

Prospectus

This project is designed to involve parents in developing a Five-Year Plan for the school district. Such a plan will detail specific educational priorities, goals and objectives for the district. The payoff: participants build relationships with school personnel and better understand their schools, and school officials better understand the needs and interests of parents.

Procedures

The **administrative staff** or **public information officer** prepares a short, written State-of-the-School-District report, which is sent home with students in January. This report details some of the school system's priorities, activities and problems. Included with this report is a 3 × 5 postage-paid card asking parents' opinions of their schools and whether or not they would be interested in serving on a committee to help set specific goals and objectives for the district.

In mid-February, the **administrative staff** sorts through the responses and groups them into five categories: personnel, finance, curriculum, housing and attendance, and communications. The administrative staff assembles names of parents who indicated an interest in serving on a committee and categorizes names according to respective committee interests. Committee appointments are made by the **school board** and are based on board policy which encourages broad-based representation.

The **superintendent** prepares and personally signs a letter to each participant, thanking them for their interest and willingness to work.

In March, the **school board** holds organizational meetings with all committee members. At these meetings, board members carefully explain the purpose, scope and objectives of the

project—namely, that committee members will study, discuss and prepare a report on their committee's specific topic: the district's communications program, for example. Each committee will help develop guidelines and objectives for its particular area.

The **committees** spend the spring and summer months studying and discussing their topics with students, school staff and other citizens in the community. Each committee is headed by a board-appointed chairperson. The specific activities of each committee (e.g., research, holding hearings, etc.) are left up to the committee to decide. The **public information officer** provides information assistance as needed. Committees are encouraged to turn to outside resources (e.g., other school districts, the state department of education and associations) for background information and assistance in preparing their priorities and objectives.

At the first school board meeting of the following school year, each **committee** presents its written report, with an oral summary delivered by the committee chairperson.

The **school board**, then, considers each committee report as it reviews and revises the Five-Year Plan for the district.

A week later, follow-up thank-you letters from the **board president** are sent out to each committee member. The board president should be sure to keep committee members apprised of the steps the board is taking in the goal-setting process.

Monthly Luncheons with Community Leaders

Prospectus

A luncheon provides an informal setting in which board members and school staff can develop a rapport with key community leaders. Over lunch, one or two board members, the superintendent and one or two other administrators can show appreciation for past community support, foster new support in a casual atmosphere and show interest in the ideas and opinions of community leaders.

Procedures

Prior to the luncheon

During the summer, the **school board** sets the budget for the luncheons, taking into account the cost of the lunches themselves, printing and mailing invitations, and purchasing flowers, place cards and the like. In preparing the budget, the board roughly estimates the number of guests to be invited to each luncheon.

In accordance with this estimated number of guests and in line with the budget considerations, the **superintendent's staff** contacts a restaurant and plans the luncheon a few weeks prior to the event. An option to cut the expenses of this project: hold the luncheons in one of the district schools or in different schools throughout the year. In this case, arrangements should be made in advance with food service personnel. Holding a luncheon at school has the additional benefit of giving community leaders the opportunity to get a first-hand glimpse of the institution they are supporting.

The **superintendent**, with input from board members, administrative staff and the public information office, develops a list of key community people to be invited to the luncheon. This list should be a representative sample of the community—not limited to those community sectors which

have been exceptionally friendly to the schools. Some people who might be included are community political leaders, minority leaders, PTA leaders, lawyers and local business people—individuals who regularly talk with a number of community residents.

About three weeks before each luncheon, the **superintendent's office** mails the invitations. The **public information officer** prepares a release describing the luncheon and sends invitations to media representatives. The release emphasizes that the particular luncheon is one of ten monthly luncheons held throughout the school year to better acquaint and involve the community with the schools.

Support staff orders flowers and name tags and arranges seating, with at least one board member or administrative staff person sitting at each table. To help insure effective, informal discussion, the number of people sitting at each table should be limited to five, with no more than two school representatives at any table.

During the luncheon

The **board president** (or another board member) delivers a brief welcoming speech, followed by a short update on school district goals and accomplishments delivered by the **superintendent.** The remainder of the luncheon consists of informal discussion.

Following the luncheon

Follow-up thank-you notes, under the personal signature of the **board president,** are mailed to all participants. The invitation list is kept on file and continually updated to facilitate planning for future programs.

Curriculum Presentations

Prospectus

Curriculum presentations, prepared by teachers and delivered at regular monthly board meetings, give teachers the chance to demonstrate their wares to the board and the community and offer the public a glimpse of how their children learn and where their tax dollars go. At the same time, board members are likely to find the presentations both informative and a pleasant change of pace from more routine board business.

Well-prepared curriculum presentations promote good school-community relations by:

- keeping the school board and the public informed about goals, procedures and results of new and ongoing educational programs;
- providing an opportunity for teachers and other school staff to explain how they operate in teaching-learning situations;
- involving teachers and others in preparing presentations which also may be used effectively for PTA meetings, open houses and other district functions; and
- providing a means of sharing among disciplines and programs so that those involved in diverse aspects of district operations will be apprised of each others' daily functions.

Procedures

Prior to the presentation

In September, the **assistant superintendent for instruction** (or a member of the central office staff responsible for curriculum matters) prepares a schedule listing a curriculum program for each month of the year. The subjects to be discussed in the presentations should cover a wide range of curriculum areas. The schedule should be ready in time for the first board meeting in September, when it is presented to the board for approval.

During September, the **individual responsible for instruction**

informs teachers of their assignments, preferably assigning more than one teacher to each curriculum area. In this way, the public and the board will be made aware of varying approaches to a particular subject.

In turn, the **teachers** prepare their presentations, which may include a syllabus, general description of the course, samples of student projects and perhaps slides of students at work. In addition, teachers should be prepared to discuss specific learning goals of the program. The total curriculum presentation ideally should last no longer than 30 minutes.

Note: On an ongoing basis, **teachers** or the **instructional materials department** might well prepare and assemble slides, overhead transparencies, photographs and other materials which could be developed at a later date into various district curriculum presentations.

A few days before each month's board meeting, the **public information officer** informs the local media of the curriculum presentation, indicating subject matter, time, location and purpose of the programs.

Following the board meeting

The **public information officer** sends a news release—including slides or photographs that were utilized during the presentation—to the media, describing the program. If appropriate, the **superintendent** or **board president** pens a thank-you note to the teacher-presenter.

Annual Art Show

Prospectus

An annual art show has two primary objectives: to recognize student and faculty achievement in art and to bring parents and citizens into the schools. An additional benefit: after the show, art will be displayed for a year in the central administration building.

Procedures

(Sample target date: May 15)

Prior to the show

Early in September, the **school board** forms a task force of **art teachers,** an **administrator** and a **board member** to plan the show. The plan should include the date and location for the show, the criteria for selection and limitations on the number of pieces to be displayed. By the beginning of October, the **task force** notifies all art teachers of the exhibit and its theme and specifications and sets April 15 as the deadline for submitting entries. **Art teachers,** then, are on the look-out throughout the year for suitable work and encourage student improvement by telling them about the show.

By January 1, the **task force** determines how much space will be allotted to the exhibit and approximately how many pictures will be displayed and orders standard-sized frames. (In subsequent years, few new frames will be needed.)

In April, the **public information officer** prepares a mailing to be sent to all parents informing them of the art show. At this time, the information officer also prepares a news release for local media describing the show and its objectives and encouraging media coverage of the event. The public information officer arranges for refreshments and door-greeters (perhaps student leaders) for the first day of the show.

By May 1, the **task force** has reviewed the submitted art and selected items for display. The task force is responsible for

matting, framing or otherwise preparing the works for the exhibit. The task force provides the public information department with information about each work: its title, the medium used and a sentence about the artist. Using this information, the **public information officer** prepares a guidebook of the exhibit, which will remain available to building visitors during the year.

A week prior to the show, the **task force** arranges the art in the building.

During the art show

All **board members**, the **superintendent** and **art teachers** are present to informally chat with parents and students.

Following the art show

Art remains on display until next year's show. The **superintendent** or **board president** sends a personal note of commendation to each artist whose work is displayed.

Weekly Employee Newsletter

Prospectus

By consolidating announcements and information, a weekly newsletter will help eliminate the paper blizzard weathered by many school employees. Such a newsletter can well become the key source of information for all district staff. For maximum effectiveness, efforts should be made to keep the publication short—it should be limited, if possible, to both sides of an 8½ × 11 sheet of paper each week. This keeps the newsletter inexpensive and easy to produce.

The newsletter should include the following kinds of material:

- basic employee information about district policy, salary, benefits and staff vacancies;
- weekly meeting calendar which will serve to coordinate all meetings in the district, such as parent nights and athletic events;
- brief statement of actions of the school board at weekly meetings; and
- miscellaneous announcements or perhaps a brief, informal message from the superintendent.

Besides providing useful information, the newsletter allows board members to share with employees the philosophy and direction of the district.

Procedures

Establishing a newsletter

The **superintendent** appoints a newsletter editor—someone in the district's public information department or an administrator or teacher with writing skills. The superintendent also appoints an activities coordinator, who is responsible for gathering information about dates, times and locations of district activities, policies and board actions.

In each school building, one person—perhaps the secretary—is

designated to collect information about building news and meetings and to relay the information to the district activities coordinator.

Preparing the newsletter

(For distribution every Friday)

Building news coordinators submit to the newsletter editor, by Wednesday morning, a list of all the meetings which have been scheduled for the following week, including date, time and place.

By Wednesday noon, the **activities coordinator** submits to the newsletter editor the activities calendar for the following week.

By Thursday noon, the **newsletter editor** reviews all submitted materials and prepares the newsletter in final form for duplication. The editor adds any pertinent information and edits announcements for clarity. Emphasis should be on brevity—keeping the newsletter as concise as possible. The editor places announcements in priority order, putting first those which are of interest to the greatest number of staff members. To facilitate reading, each announcement will be headed with the appropriate employee classification, or target audience.

General office personnel duplicate the newsletter on mimeograph (or print shop can run on offset press). Bulk copies are then distributed to each building and placed in staff mailboxes.

Follow-up

Six months after inaugurating the publication, and every year thereafter, the **public information office** (or the **newsletter editor**) surveys employees to obtain reader comments and recommendations for improvement. A form asking for evaluation and recommendations may be stapled to one of the newsletters.

Publishing a Newspaper Column

Prospectus

A biweekly newspaper column written by the superintendent costs little and provides an excellent opportunity for the district's chief administrator to tell the school story: the achievements, the problems and the issues facing the district.

Procedures

'Selling' the idea

The **superintendent** approaches the news or editorial-section editor of the local newspaper(s) with samples of the kind of monthly column he wishes to write. The column should be presented as a key means of keeping citizens informed of developments in their schools.

Initial consideration/caveat: a quick, sloppy column may do more harm than good for the district's image. Therefore, it may be advisable to initiate the column on an occasional schedule at first. Once the editorial demands of a column have been mastered, the switch to a regular schedule can be easily made.

Writing the column

After the **superintendent** has received approval and space from the newspaper, it is time to get down to the business of actually writing the column. The topics should vary according to public concerns and preferably should be linked to newsworthy developments in education—such as the controversy over student test scores.

As a source of ideas, the **superintendent** will want to solicit suggestions from other board members and district personnel. The writer may wish to call upon **staff specialists** for information on particular topics. Writing of the article should begin at least a week before the newspaper's deadline, to allow adequate time for editing and rewriting. If possible, it's desirable that the superintendent's copy be edited by a trained journalist—perhaps someone in the district's public information office or a teacher with publications experience.

Informal Sessions with Students

Prospectus

The consumers of education are, of course, students. These sessions, held over lunch, will allow students and board members to meet informally and to freely discuss issues and problems. The meetings should be held at least once each semester.

Procedures

Prior to the luncheon meeting

Three weeks before the meeting, the **school board** chooses a member to chair the project. This **board member** sets the date and contacts high school building administrators to inform them of the project. Each building administrator submits a list of 5-10 students representing the student body--not necessarily student government leaders. After inviting the students, the board member sends each a list of possible subjects that might be discussed. The **superintendent,** at least a week before the meeting, contacts the school cafeteria and arranges for a luncheon. Name tags are made up for all participants.

A few days before the meeting, the **board member** heading the event contacts the participating students and board members, solicits topics of interest and draws up an informal agenda. Besides the 5 or 6 student leaders, the luncheon should be attended by 2 board members and the superintendent.

During the meeting

The **board member** who has solicited the topics acts as the discussion leader. The tone of these meetings should be open and receptive; the luncheons will be more fruitful if both sides come willing to listen and to share ideas and opinions.

Following the luncheon

As soon as possible, the **superintendent** drafts a brief synopsis of key subjects or problems discussed at the luncheon. A copy of the report is circulated to each participant and one copy is forwarded for review to the school board.

Awards Ceremony in Recognition of Outstanding Student Achievement

Prospectus

Granting recognition to students for outstanding accomplishments in academics, publications and athletics encourages student achievement and fosters public interest in school activities. The awards ceremonies may be held once or twice a year.

Procedures

(Sample target date: March 1)

Prior to the awards ceremony

Early in September, the **school board** authorizes the contest and determines the categories of awards that will be made. Award categories might include:

- Academics—awards to winners of district-wide current events tests, math tests, writing contests, spelling bees;
- Publications—awards to the best student journalist—either for school newspaper or literary magazine;
- Athletics—awards to athletes who go to the state finals or beyond.

After the board establishes the number and type of categories applicable to the district, the **superintendent** sets the date for award nominations and informs teaching staff.

The **superintendent** chooses the setting for the awards ceremony, making sure the location is big enough to accommodate a large crowd. The greater the number of awards being given, the larger the crowd will be. The ceremony is best held in the evening.

In January, the **superintendent** appoints panels to judge each award category. The publications judging panel might be, for

example, comprised of someone from the district's public information office and one or more persons from the local media.

In February, the **public information officer** provides the local media with a short release describing the ceremony, including the date and time it is to take place. Through notes sent home with students and district newsletters, the public information department informs parents and citizens of the event. Special notes from the **superintendent** should be mailed to the parents of children who will win awards.

In February, the district **support staff** prepares whatever trophies, plaques or certificates are deemed appropriate.

During the ceremony

Following the **board president's** welcoming speech, the **superintendent** and **board president** present the awards.

The **public information officer** photographs the ceremony and gathers information on all students who receive awards.

Following the ceremony

The day after the ceremony, the **public information officer** provides photos, cutlines and news releases to local media.

Reception for Retiring Employees

Prospectus

District employees—both present and past—are important conveyers of information and attitudes about the school district. In addition to recognizing employees for loyal service, a reception for retirees has proven successful in enhancing staff morale and improving school-community relations.

The reception is held once a year, toward the end of the school year.

Procedures

(Sample target date: June 10)

Prior to the reception

The **school board president** appoints a steering committee to coordinate the project. The first year the project is instituted, the committee should be appointed in September, to allow ample time to establish the program. In subsequent years, the committee need not be appointed until early April. The committee should consist of one or two board members along with someone from the staff of the district's personnel and public information departments.

During the first year of the program, the **steering committee** spends the first semester planning the program—deciding upon format (may be similar to a graduation ceremony) and entertainment and determining who will be invited. The second semester is spent implementing the project—preparing certificates of appreciation, mailing invitations and handling decorations and refreshments.

In April, the **public information department** prepares invitations. Meanwhile, the **personnel department** prepares a list of all employees—both certified and classified—who will be retiring in the current school year.

Early in May, the **public information department** mails invita-

tions to retiring staff and their families, other school staff, PTA leaders and board members. The **steering committee** contacts the head of the high school music department, who coordinates student entertainment for the event.

In May, the **public information officer** prepares certificates for the retiring employees. The certificates should recognize the employees for their years of service to the school district and should be signed by the **board president** and **superintendent.** At this time, the **public information officer** prepares a printed program for the evening, listing the names of all retiring employees with their years of service, and informs the news media of the event.

A few weeks prior to the program, district **support staff** arrange for flowers, retirement gifts and other decorations for the reception. Arrangements for refreshments are made through the district food service staff.

During the reception

The reception is similar in format to a high school commencement ceremony, with retirees walking up to a podium to accept their certificates and retirement gifts, if appropriate. The **director of personnel** calls the role of retirees, and the certificates are presented by the **superintendent** and **board president.** Special recognition is given to the five employees with the greatest number of years of service. The ceremony is followed by refreshments and entertainment.

The **public information officer** takes photographs of the reception, which are then mailed to retirees as a reminder of the evening.